

Michaud Applauds Committee Passage of Veterans' Bills

Wednesday, July 16 2008

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"The committee's action today cleared a number of important bills that cover a wide range of issues that are of concern to many of our nation's veterans," said Michaud. "As we continue our work on the committee, we will continue to do everything we can to make sure that VA keeps up with the ever-changing needs of our men and women returning home from service. At the same time, however, we continue to promote changes through legislation that will positively affect the care and benefits received by all veterans."

More information on the bills passed by the committee today can be found below.

H.R. 6445:

- prohibits the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from collecting certain co-payments from veterans who are catastrophically disabled,
- expand the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide counseling for family members of veterans receiving non-service connected treatment,
- directs the VA to develop and implement a comprehensive policy on the management of pain experienced by veterans enrolled for health care services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs,
- directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish not more than seven consolidated patient accounting centers for conducting industry-modeled regionalized billing and collection activities

- simplifies and updates the national standard to encourage testing of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus

H.R. 1527: direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a pilot program to permit certain highly rural veterans enrolled in the health system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to receive covered health services through providers other than those of the Department.

H.R. 2192: establishes an Ombudsman within the Veterans Health Administration.

H.R. 4255: provides assistance to the Paralympic Program of the United States Olympic Committee

H.R. 6225:

- requires full use of equity powers, including temporary or permanent injunctions, temporary restraining orders, and contempt orders,

- protects the rights and benefits of veterans, provides tuition, reenrollment, and student loan relief for postsecondary students called to military service; requires institutions of higher education to refund tuition for service members who have not received academic credit due to military service, and provides a service member the opportunity to reenroll in the same academic status prior to military service

- allows individuals called to military service to terminate or suspend certain service contracts entered into before the individual receives notice of a permanent change of station or deployment orders and to provide penalties for violations of interest rate limitations

- allows a spouse of an active duty member to maintain the same state of residency as the service member for state taxation

H.R. 6221: authorizes \$10 million for VA to conduct a five-year pilot program to expand the veterans' campus work study program.

H.R. 674: repeals the provision of law requiring termination of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans as of December 31, 2009

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